

TIMBER HOMES

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Home For The Holidays

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With its exposed rafters, timber trusses and antique redwood ceilings, the front porch is a preview of the timber frame construction found inside the home.

Caleb's Journey

Old World meets high-tech in Colorado

Testing new design theories and construction technologies is a passion for Michael, Heidi and John Rath of Trilogy Partners. For the past eight years, they've incorporated different elements into each of the timber frame homes they have built in the mountains of Colorado.

Michael serves as the primary designer and client

liaison, John is in charge of construction operations, and Heidi, the silent partner, is their steadfast muse, encouraging her brothers every step of the way.

"A timber frame sets the character; it paints the background which we then fill in," Michael says. "The timber frame may give the direction, but many things can happen along the journey."



This hybrid timber frame home was designed to look like it had been on its site for decades. Chinked log siding, 150-year-old vertical board-and-batten redwood and wavy-edged clapboard mix for a vintage look on the exterior.

Story by Teresa Wolff • Photos by Roger Wade • Styling by Debra Grahl

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“As a first step, we incorporated the timber frame into the stick frame.”

Once Upon a Time

Every timber frame home Trilogy Partners builds has a story. For this home, Michael says, the partners drew on the experiences of a fictional character they dubbed “Caleb,” who might have lived a hundred years ago. They envisioned Caleb as a master craftsman who spent decades building homes for others, until one day, it was time to build for himself and his family.

“Caleb was our inspiration because he salvaged the leftover building materials that otherwise would have been discarded to use in his home,” Michael says. “This was our overriding philosophy as we began to plan a home that was a historically accurate turn-of-the-20th-century building, which naturally lent itself to a timber and log structure using traditional joinery.”

Situated on more than an acre, the home is located in the Highlands at Breckenridge subdivision, two miles from downtown Breckenridge. The site is in a fairly heavily treed development with views to the north and west of mountain ranges and valleys. In this idyllic setting, Trilogy Partners combined timber frame with conventional stick-frame construction for a home that was relatively affordable and very energy-efficient.

The great room demonstrates the dramatic look that can be achieved by supporting the timber trusses with massive Douglas fir character logs, erected by Ruff Timber. Gray-washed salvaged barn wood conceals an LCD television tucked into the stone chimney.









The entry of the 5,300-square-foot home leads to a hall with a cut quartzite stone floor. On the right is a mudroom and staircase leading to the attached apartment. To the left is the great room complex with an open living room, kitchen and dining room. Straight down the hall from the front door past the staircase is the powder room and the entrance to the master bedroom

“On the second level, we positioned the attached apartment, consisting of one large room with a nook for a bed and a closet. There also is what appears to be a small building with a tin roof—this is the bathroom,” Michael says.

The walk-out basement includes the family room with video entertainment wall and kitchenette, which leads to a cowboy bedroom and cowboy bath, equipped with an outdoor-style shower, an antique claw-foot tub and antique Western style vanity. Two additional bedrooms with a shared bath are found straight ahead of the staircase landing and slightly to the right of the family room. The patio is accessible from both the family room and the cowboy bedroom.

Above: Instead of hiding the exposed exhaust pipe, Trilogy Partners turned it into an architectural feature, something that might have been found in a log cabin years ago. Hyper-modern bendable monorail lighting with low voltage halogen lamps is designed to contrast with the reclaimed wood in the great room. Opposite: Michael finds most of their guests naturally congregate in the kitchen area. Here, the countertops are polished chipped-edge granite that rest on alder cabinets. The work island is equipped with Décor warming drawers, while the curved bar is complete with a beverage cooler, liquor cabinet, and sink.

Beneath the Beauty

“Our plan is to take the mountain home to the next generation,” Michael explains. “As a first step, we incorporated the timber frame into the stick frame.” Trilogy then chose to enclose the walls with structural insulated panels (SIPs) that keep the home extremely weathertight. “We can control the temperature and humidity throughout, resulting in minimal shrinkage and checking of the timbers and greater comfort in the dry mountain environment,” he says.

Trilogy also specified a hybrid heating system for the home that combines a high-efficiency natural gas boiler, which powers a radiant in-floor heat



source, with a high-velocity, forced-air heating system. An air-circulating system utilizes a whole-house air exchanger to bring fresh outside air in and expel stale air. This type of system refreshes the air in the home every few hours and is more efficient than opening windows. Additionally, the in-floor radiant heat in the lower-level concrete slab and in the bedrooms is an excellent method for regulating the temperature in different zones.

“Since we have been incorporating new technologies in our timber frame homes, the owners tell us how energy-efficient the home is,” Michael says.

Bringing the home into the 21st century meant enlisting the newer wireless systems. A multi-zone audio distribution system accesses thousands of music and audio files from a computer hard drive and the Internet, then distributes the audio through multiple zones in the home. A home-automation system allows the owners to remotely control all of their lights and alarms. All of the LCD televisions are hidden in the walls throughout the home.

“The character of a timber frame home can be compromised if there is a plethora of exposed wires

and electronic components. All of our homes have a closet that houses the wiring and lighting and home theater controls,” Michael says. “We have found it isn’t necessary to hire expensive technology experts: It’s easy to educate yourself on the latest technology using the information available on the Internet.”

Good Looks, Too

“For us, form and function go hand-in-hand in decorating. We like to refer to our style as Ralph Lauren meets mountain rustic or old meets new in terms of lighting technologies and appliances. We always use natural materials where possible, such as the granite countertops, and recycled materials and woods,” Michael says. To prevent the homes from looking too masculine, Michael says he strives for a “yin and yang” balance in the décor. “Heavy masculine structural elements embrace the feminine finishes, such as in moldings, curved timber braces, and fabrics,” he says.

Wood-burning fireplaces are highly discouraged in Breckenridge. So the group chose a gas fireplace for the great room and a gas fireplace insert on



Opposite: An antique light fixture sports marbled glass shades in varying heights to create the illusion of candles. Alder wainscoting and logs give the dining area a timeless feel. Colorado Custom Wood Floors installed the recycled hardwood floors.

Left: The hallway behind the headwall in the master bedroom leads to the master bath with twin vanities and double thick granite countertops. A jetted tub with a Rocky Mountain view adds touches of luxury.

Below: The master bedroom, like all of the rooms in the house, enjoy dramatic views. Hand-textured walls add to the charm of this retreat. The spiral stairs lead to the loft office.





the deck, as well as a gas/wood stove for the master bedroom.

Trilogy Partners enlisted Cindy Gray of Interiors by Design to help them complete the interior furnishings, 90 percent of which were purchased specifically for the home. Michael relates that all of the kitchen, dining, great room and master bedroom furnishings were new.

In addition to the structure, Trilogy Partners also designed the landscaping in house, using a registered landscape designer. They selected plants that were indigenous to the environment and re-vegetated what was disturbed during construction using a native grass mixture.

Above: The walkout basement recreation room serves as a mini-apartment for guests. Sandstone countertops and floors make clean-up a breeze. The home's electronics closet is camouflaged behind the black glass door beside the built-in television.

Right: The 'Cowboy Bathroom' glories in 1920s Western style. A slipper tub with chrome feet sets the tone. Black marble countertops, alder wainscoting, exposed plumbing and black and white floor tile lend a nostalgic note.



As much as they loved the home they created based upon Caleb's inspiration, the Rath family realized it was not to be their one lifelong residence. The home recently went under contract to be sold to a family from Denver who will use it as a weekend and vacation retreat.

"I believe this is such a wonderful home because of our team of creative people. It took a great commitment of time and energy on the part of the design/build team at Trilogy. We took great satisfaction from the extraordinary reception the home

received from so many who visited," Michael says. "We tried a lot of new technologies and design ideas, took some risks, and it appears they all paid off. As much as we would like to keep the Caleb's Journey, it's time to move on."

RESOURCES

Colorado Custom Wood Floors, (970) 668-4994

Interiors by Design, Inc., (970) 453-9020

Trilogy Partners, (970) 453-2230,
www.trilogybuilds.com



At the rear of the home, Trilogy Partners installed a timber-roofed deck off the great room, which shelters the heated stone patio. A smaller timber deck off the master bedroom provides a private retreat for the owners.